

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON SHIPPING

ICONS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

LONDON 14 NOVEMBER 2000

ISMA Intervention

It is evident most of the discussion at this meeting has concentrated on the accident/incident, its investigation, punishment and apportionment of blame. However this is all too late. What has to be achieved is the creation of an environment where such occurrences are far less likely to occur.

This is what ISMA is seeking to achieve.

ISMA is a quality organisation; promoting quality not only in ship and crew management but in the industry as a whole.

It succeeds this by means of a) the ISMA Code which not only embraces ISO 9002 and the ISM Code but goes far beyond them and b) the method of auditing compliance with the ISMA Code, using three Class Societies members (selected at random from ABS, Det Norske Veritas, Germanischer Lloyd and Lloyd's Register). This ensures that the ISMA Code certificate cannot be "bought" and is thus above suspicion.

ISMA has been asked a number of times about the value of the ISMA Code now that ISM is in force. The simple answer is, if Port State Control could be assured that the ISM Code certificate accurately reflected all that was required within the ISM Code they would be redundant. And even if, sometime in the distant future, every ship were to conform fully to ISM, ISMA still guarantees a higher, more comprehensive and all-embracing quality standard. As we all know, it is the checks and balances that serve to prevent the accidents and incidents that have concerned so much of the earlier discussions today.

However, as has already been mentioned, quality costs money. Even though the ISMA audit combines the ISM Code audit and certifies the member as being in compliance with ISO 9002, there is an additional cost involved. As the market place rules, the ISMA quality member obtains the same fee as his less quality-conscious competitor. Halos don't bring in revenue.

Therefore the benefits of true quality must come via another route. One avenue is recognition of Port State Control. ISMA has already obtained that recognition from the UK MCA and the Netherlands authority, is in dialogue with AMSA, and is awaiting a response from the US Coast Guard. Such recognition of quality will reduce the necessity for excessive inspections and surveys: any reduction in the number of surveys and their inherent delay will save the manager and owner time and money and make the business of shipping more efficient. This will also, as a by product, penalise those less able to prove quality as PSC concentrates its efforts where they are really needed. When this approach is adopted the result an improvement in quality throughout shipping.

To bring the Commission abreast of current events I can report that our Code has recently been the subject to an in-depth review. It now incorporates the new ISO standard 9001:2000 and relevant practices of the environmental management code ISO 14001.

The ship or crew manager armoured with the ISMA Code knows he is streets ahead of the average but, unless he obtains recognition and the resultant savings in costs he is faced with a hard task justifying the expense of maintaining quality to his board and shareholders.

R E F Morriss
ISMA Secretary

24 November 2000